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The Absence of the Holy Spirit

In a day when the Holy Spirit has withdrawn in a large measure from the churches and congregations of our land it would be foolish of us to be blind to the awful desolation and barrenness which is now so evident in religious circles as a result of this withdrawal of the Spirit's saving and sanctifying influences. In other days the power of the Holy Spirit was manifest in the conversion of many souls under the preaching of the Word and in the building up of the true people of God in the faith of the Gospel. How few comparatively today are brought out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. How few among believers attain eminency in the life of faith. The cause is traceable to this one thing — the absence of the Holy Spirit in a large measure from the Church of God in the World. How beautiful did parts of our land — and of other lands — become in other days when the Lord breathed upon them by His Spirit. Now, when the Spirit of the Lord has withdrawn, these same parts have become veritable wildernesses. Nothing can more seriously affect the Church of God in the world than the Spirit's withdrawal from her midst. Against this fearful calamity warning was given to the Church. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Eph. 4:30. "Quench not the Spirit." 1 Thess. 5:19. These are injunctions of God's Word which are lightly set aside at our peril.

The causes of the Spirit's withdrawing of His gracious influences amongst us as a people ought to be a matter of deep concern to us if we have any real interest in the spiritual well-being of our land and of our own souls. Why is it that at present the Lord is to a great extent a stranger amongst us?

The first cause we would mention is our failure fully to recognise and acknowledge that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person. We may be ready to admit the divinity of the Father and of the Son, and yet lose sight of the

glorious truth that the Holy Spirit is God. The Shorter Catechism leaves us in no doubt of this cardinal doctrine of the faith — the doctrine of the Trinity of Persons in the one Godhead. "There are three persons in the Godhead—the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory." Shorter Catechism, Quest. 6,. Unless we recognise the transcendent glory of the Holy Spirit as eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son, we rob Him of His glory. And if we do not honour Him as God, have we any ground of complaint if He withdraws from us?

The second cause we would mention is our lack of concern for His effectual working in our midst or in our own souls. Too often we show so little concern for the effectual working of God's grace in our souls that we are little different from those who said: "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost" — only that our ignorance is wilful. Were we weighed down under a realisation of the truth — that "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" — and of the alone agency of the Holy Spirit in the work of regeneration and sanctification, we would be of another mind. But if this is the dreadful state of mind we are in — that we do not care whether or not the Holy Spirit is in our midst — is it any wonder then if the Holy Spirit withdraws from us?

The third cause we would mention is our sin and backsliding. How quickly is the Holy Spirit grieved away through the sins and backslidings of the people of God. If carnality and worldly-mindedness are given a place instead of spirituality and heavenly-mindedness, then it is not long before the Holy Spirit withdraws His gracious influences upon the soul. How contrary is the love of sin to those tendencies produced by the Holy Spirit in the soul. Of the Spirit it is written that "when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." If we despise His offices as the Convincer of sin, Regenerater and Sanctifier, can we then complain if He withdraws from us?

Having looked at some of the causes which bring about the withdrawal of the Spirit's working in the Church and in the individual soul, let us go on to consider how He may be constrained to return. As we do so let us remember that it is easier to grieve the Holy Spirit away than to obtain His return.

The first step is to acknowledge our offence in ever grieving Him away. We have reason to smite upon our own breasts for our part in causing His withdrawal. Let us recognise the awfulness of our offence as committed against a divine Person. Let us not minimise our sin and guilt, but be deeply conscious of it and readily acknowledge it. With what awe upon our spirits and holy fear and trembling we ought to come into God's presence

to confess our fault and to seek the return of His Holy Spirit amongst us. How deeply conscious David was of his sin when he entreated the Lord so earnestly — “Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.” Psalm 51:11. May we as earnestly entreat Him, and this we are encouraged to do by His own Word — “if ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?”

The second step is to recognise the absolute necessity of the Holy Spirit's power if any saving or sanctifying work is to be accomplished in any soul. What barrenness there is wherever His power is denied whether it be in a Church or congregation, or in an individual soul, a community or a nation. Where the Holy Spirit is absent there death reigns. His is a life-giving power. He alone can bring from the grave of spiritual death to spiritual life. What a resurrection this is! He alone can visit a congregation, a Church, an individual, a community or a nation with His awakening and reviving influences and bring about such a radical transformation that what was once a desolate wilderness becomes as the garden of the Lord.

In keeping in view the absolute need of the work of God's Spirit, we are not to be satisfied with anything but genuine manifestations of the Spirit's power. We are to remember that there are counterfeit revivals and Pentecosts. These do not bear the stamp of the Holy Spirit upon them but that of Satan as an angel of light seeking to delude souls for eternity. The Pentecostal manifestations so common today in speaking with tongues, etc., have all the signs of a counterfeit work. The true work of the Spirit of God reaches the affections and will through the understanding. It is by the inshining of Divine light into the soul that light is given to the darkened understanding. “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” 2 Cor. 4:6. So, too, the Holy Spirit operates along with the word of God. It is the truth of God's word which is sealed with divine power on the souls and consciences of poor sinners. Therefore all purely emotional and mystical experiences are not to be regarded as the work of the Spirit but as counterfeit.

The third step is to give that place to the Holy Spirit which is His as the Third Person of the glorious Trinity. This will mean that we acknowledge that all the attributes of deity are His. It will mean that we will not be blind to the fact that He is sovereign in His working. Men think that they can compel the Holy Spirit to do their bidding. God, the Holy Spirit, is as much in their hands, they think, as God, the Son, is supposed to be in the hands of the priest in the sacrifice of the mass. How dishonouring is all this to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. To dishonour one Person of the

Trinity is to dishonour all, as the Saviour said: "He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him." John 6:23. We are to bow before a Triune God, giving honour and glory to Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

The fourth step is to realise that it is for the sake of Christ that the Holy Spirit comes. In the Covenant of redemption the Spirit's work is to apply the redemption purchased by Christ to the souls of sinners. In this He is the Spirit of Christ and delights in regenerating, quickening and enlivening souls and in taking of the things of Christ and revealing them unto sinners. Our plea must therefore be that God, for the sake of Christ, would send His Holy Spirit into our hearts to quicken and revive us and to lead us unto the things of God. He who was the Spirit of inspiration in the prophets and Apostles is the One who can open the understanding of sinners to the truth and open the Scriptures to the understanding. What light flows in then! What a glorious view is obtained of Christ the alone Saviour of sinners as the crucified and now risen and exalted Redeemer! — for it is the peculiar delight of the Holy Spirit to make Christ known. The Saviour Himself declared of the Comforter: "He will not speak of himself . . . He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." John 16:13, 14. Will we not, then, breathe this prayer: "Come, Holy Spirit."

Sermon

by Rev. Angus MacKay, Tarbert, Harris

"And she was in bitterness of soul and prayed unto the Lord and wept sore. And she vowed a vow and said, "O Lord of Hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head." 1 Samuel 1: 10, 11.

In this chapter we have a vivid account of Hannah's experiences of trials, grief, aggravations of trial, disappointments, perseverance in prayer and finally a promise from the Lord and the fulfilment of it. These experiences are by no means peculiar to Hannah, but rather typical of God's dealings with His own in all generations. Her trial was of a very personal nature and though trials are common to the Lord's people the nature of a particular trial may be very personal. Her reaction is worthy of our notice. We read that she prayed unto the Lord and wept sore. Blessed

are the trials which drive or draw us to the throne of grace. The carnal mind rebels against adversity, but grace in living exercise submits to the Lord's dealings and acknowledges His sovereignty in **all** things. Hannah glorified God in so doing.

We may briefly consider:

Firstly, Hannah's grief occasioned by her affliction.

Secondly, her resolution to go to the temple.

Thirdly, deliverance from affliction.

(a) in the promise

(b) in the fulfilment of the promise.

First of all we may notice that Hannah's grief was due to a personal affliction — an affliction which was ordained of God. He hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass. When affliction, personal or otherwise, overtakes us we must humbly acknowledge that that very affliction was foreordained and consequently unavoidable. It would be to God's glory and to the good of our own souls to meditate quietly and calmly and prayerfully on affliction affecting us. We should search diligently into all the known circumstances attending it, give secondary and apparent causes their own subordinate place and trace the disposing of all things to Him who does according to His will in the armies of Heaven and among us, the inhabitants of the earth. It ill becomes us to question in a querulous spirit "What doest Thou?" but rather let us be still and know that He is God.

Now Hannah's grief was aggravated by the apparent prosperity of the wicked. Penninah, Elkanah's other wife, enjoyed the blessing denied to Hannah, but it is obvious from the context that she was denied the greater blessing possessed, if not immediately enjoyed by Hannah. This is evident from her attitude to Hannah; she showed her no sympathy in her affliction but despised and mocked her. This was very trying, but more salutary for Hannah than the feigned sympathy of the ungodly. It is the sad lot of many to have daily contact with Penninah's descendants. We may not be the direct target of the despisers and scoffers and scorners as Hannah was but the very conversation of the wicked grieves the soul of the righteous as was the case with Lot in his day. To rob God of His Glory was and is the life work of Satan and all his servants.

Further, her affliction and the grief occasioned by it was not for a day or an hour. It was prolonged over a number of years, though in God's wisdom we are not told how many. Over the years, faint hope and frustration fluctuated until she was well nigh overwhelmed. Even Elkanah's well intentioned attempts at comforting were futile and a sense of his own virtues were more obvious to himself than to Hannah in her distress. If we have no personal trial comparable to Hannah's surely the low state of the

Cause of Christ should be a burden to us. How frequently are our hopes in this direction disappointed! Too often the promising bud fails to blossom let alone bear fruit. This should and does cause us sadness but we must not give way to despondency.

Hannah did not give way to despondency. We read that she prayed unto the Lord. Before she could pray unto the Lord she must have been taught of the Lord, "He that cometh unto God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of all them that diligently seek Him." The Saviour assures us that this knowledge is life eternal.

Real and earnest praying to God is generally accepted as an evidence of grace in the soul. We can almost hear the sigh of relief with which the early Christians informed each other, "Behold! he prayeth!" We have nothing to fear from this man now. Saul the persecutor is converted; Paul the petitioner is praying! Like Hannah we too can confide in the Lord and feel assured that all our secrets are safe with Him. However much we may be tempted at times to believe otherwise, God hears and answers the prayers of His people — not always as and when we would wish, but as and when He deems best for us and when the answer will redound most to His own glory. His delays in answering our petitions should make us more earnest and more importunate in pressing our request. This was the effect God's silence had on Hannah. She kept on praying. She retained her integrity. Like Job she would not complain against the Lord.

From the private means of grace she resolved to attend the public means at the appointed time, which leads us to consider:

II. Her resolution to go to the temple.

She decided to go to the temple of God where His servant was. From him, no doubt, she expected guidance and comfort. On her way to the temple hope was in the ascendant but poor Hannah may have been expecting too much from Eli — the Lord's servant, holding a high office in His house on earth, but none the less a mere man. "Cease from man whose breath is in his nostrils." If this was the case Hannah's hopes were soon disappointed. While praying in the temple her lips were moving, but her voice was not heard. Words are often feeble to express deep feelings. It is written that the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

But how did Eli from whom Hannah expected comfort address her, "How long wilt thou be drunken, put away thy wine from thee." How shattering for poor Hannah to be classed among the wicked and depraved and that by the Lord's servant! No doubt Eli felt very wise in his own

conceit. Let present day Elis who would purge the sanctuary with harsh rebukes come aside for a little. Together let us visit a garden outside the walls of Jerusalem and there meet our risen Lord. How does He address a woman of a sorrowful spirit? "Woman why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" Every word is steeped in the oil of tenderness. What a pleasing contrast is here! Let us learn of the meek and lowly one rather than of Eli speaking hastily and unadvisedly. In passing, one could wish that Eli had administered his rebuke to his erring sons and shown some of the charity, misspent on them, to a woman of a sorrowful spirit.

Being taught of the Lord, Hannah knew when to speak and when to be silent. We do not read that she tried to reason or argue with Penninah or indeed with Elkanah, but on this occasion she must speak. Though bowed down and drinking bitter things she must vindicate her character and profession. How becoming a Christian is the dignity with which she answered Eli! "No, my Lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial; for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto."

She refuted the charge and explained her conduct. She spoke from the heart to the heart and the Holy Spirit enlightened Eli. Then Eli was used of the Lord to convey comfort and glad tidings to his handmaiden. "Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of Him." This introduces us to:

III. Hannah's deliverance.

Here is a full answer to her prayer albeit in promise. Faith grasped it and would not let it go. The words fell from Eli's lips but the unction and authority from the Lord. Every word of the promise was as balm to her soul. Peace, the very thing you need now, is yours now in actual possession. How apt to meet Hannah's weariness! and your request is yours in promise and sure of fulfilment since the God of Israel has engaged Himself to grant thy request. Hannah was by now well disciplined in the school of patience and she was granted a measure of wisdom which enabled her to wait on the Lord. She was well fortified now to withstand the assaults of the adversary and his agents. Penninah's poisoned arrows could blunt themselves on the shield of faith. At the set time deliverance came and with it Hannah's obligation to fulfil her vow.

Some would discourage us from taking vows. They quote the Scripture. "it is better not to vow than to vow and not to pay." True, but how much better to vow **and** to pay. Carnal ease would misquote the truth to encourage spiritual sloth. Such was not the case with Hannah. In much weakness and under many adverse circumstances she vowed unto the Lord

and the very fact that she received grace and strength to perform the vow proves that she made it in humble dependence on the God of all grace. Enjoying such a wonderful deliverance and such an abundant answer to her prayers she performed her vow with alacrity. She made her way to the temple.

She would give Samuel to the Lord, Samuel this child for whom she had prayed and whom the Lord had given her. Samuel embodied the answer to her prayers. In this respect all believers have their Samuel. If we are enabled in the smallest measure to render thanks unto the Lord it is because He has poured the grace of gratitude into our souls. If we are enabled to pray it is because He has given us the Spirit of prayer. If we are enabled to praise it is because the Holy Spirit has given us the spirit of praise. In each and every case we must acknowledge "Of thy own have we given thee." In this elevated frame of mind Hannah brought Samuel to the temple. She assured Eli of her identity. She was at ease in God's house and conversed freely with His servant. She could without rancour recall their previous meeting. She introduced Samuel to him and told him of her resolution regarding him. Having fulfilled her vow she was further blessed with the spirit of praise. Her cup was running over. She found words to express her joy and gratitude. All believers do not enjoy the same measure of liberty, but the nature of it is the same. Their gladness is generally proportionate to their sadness and so the Psalmist's prayer is answered,

According as the days have been,
Wherein we grief have had,
And years wherein we ill have seen
So do thou make us glad.

That was Hannah's happy experience in her day and the same can be ours in our measure in our day. God is the same God still and He is as able and willing to succour the poor and needy now as He was then. Like Hannah may we be found making our requests known unto Him, persevering in our petitioning, waiting on His good pleasure, making our vows and performing them in the strength of His grace. Then may we expect to rejoice in the Lord, find comfort and solace in communion with him and edification in conversing with His people — recalling the multitude of His mercies, the wisdom of His ways, the boundlessness of His resources and the greatness of His faithfulness towards the sons of men in general and the excellency of His love towards His people in particular.

"This people have I formed for myself
They shall show forth my praise"

Great as our needs may be His resources are greater and always adapted to meet individual needs. Let us open our mouths wide and we are assured that God will fill them with good. For what is good the Lord shall give and what He gives is always good. When viewed in the light of eternity our capacities here are very limited but the happy day awaits His people when their souls will be enlarged and their faculties enlivened to partake of the pleasures at His right hand, where there are pleasures forever more. In that day they "shall be made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity."

In recalling the multitude of His mercies they note that they are new every morning causing the sun to rise on the just and on the unjust. His mercies provide food convenient for man and beast. He provides enough to satisfy the need of everything that lives. The sad fact that many lack the necessities of life is due not to lack of provision on God's part, but to lack of foresight and maladministration on man's part. His mercies in providences are as the sands upon the seashore — innumerable but His mercies in grace are as the stars imparting light and cheer to wayworn pilgrims benighted on life's rugged paths.

The wisdom of His ways often occupies their thoughts. How often have they been diverted from ways that were not good and directed into safer channels! How often have they noticed the hand of providence thus intervening in their own case and in the case of others! How often have they had to acknowledge "What a mercy that I was thwarted in such and such a venture!"

He leads His own in a way that they know not but as long as they follow His voice they will enter into His fold. "There will be one fold and one Shepherd." May we hear His voice saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it."

His unlimited resources and unfailing faithfulness are themes which have fed the intellects of many and for both we should be thankful. His resources enable Him to fulfil all His promises and His faithfulness obliges him. He will not deny Himself. "Faithful is He who has promised."

But grand and admirable as these attributes are His blood-bought people are most attracted by His love — His wondrous love to a perishing world. His love in choosing to save a number which no man can number. His love in devising, accomplishing and applying the scheme of redemption. His love in making Himself known to His own. His love in enabling many in all ages to witness for Him and follow Him through good and evil report — some of them given to the lions, some to the scaffold. His love in leaving still a little salt in the earth and a little light in a dark world. Such is the extent and greatness of His love to the world in general, but how much more sweet does His love taste to the individual believer in

particular. Like David each and every believer can say "His love to me is wonderful." In the enjoyment of it they would invite gospel hearers everywhere to "taste and see that God is good. Who trusts in him is blest."

The Singing of Psalms in the Worship of God

What may we learn of Christ in this wonderful book?

9. **His Crucifixion.** Ps. xxii. throughout, also Ps. 1xix. (compared with the Gospels). The scenes attending the crucifixion are described to the minutest particulars. The mockery, the shaking the head, the parting the garments, the casting lots on the vesture, the thirst, the vinegar and the gall, the pierced hands and feet, the cry of the forsaken, the committing of His Spirit to God, and the "It is finished," as many read the last verse of Ps. xxii.

10. **His Burial and Resurrection.** Ps. xvi, 9-11, "for Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt Thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show Me the path of life," etc. (Compared with Acts ii. 25-31).

11. **His Ascension.** Ps. xlvii. 5, "God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of the trumpet." (Compared with Acts i. 11, and 1 Thess. iv. 16). Ps. 1xviii. 18, "Thou has ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive: Thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." (Compared with Eph. iv. 8-10). Ps. xxiv. 7-10, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." etc. (Compared with Rev. v. 6-14).

12. **His Second Coming.** Ps. 1, 3, 4, "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence." "He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge his people." Ps. xcvi. 6-9, "With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the Lord, the King." "Before the Lord; for he cometh to judge the earth; with righteousness shall He judge the world, and the people with equity." (Compared with Matt. xxiv, 31; 1 Cor. xv. 52). Well said Jesus, It is written "**in the Psalms, concerning Me.**" "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." are here unfolded and these "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" are replete with Christ.

If anyone will examine and compare these passages, he will readily believe that when Paul wrote, "let the word of Christ, dwell in you richly in all wisdom," it was as if he had said, "**Memorise the Psalms.**"

III. Uninspired songs could not be placed on a level with the songs of inspiration as the rule for "teaching and admonishing." All agree that the "psalms" of the text are the inspired psalms, the very word of God. "Teaching" refers to **Doctrine** — what we are to believe. "Admonishing" refers to **Practice** — how we are to live. It is not conceivable that Paul would place the writings of Uninspired men on a level with the Psalms of the Bible as a standard of doctrine and practice. "The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the word of God, the only rule of faith and obedience." — Westminster Larger Catechism.

Uninspired hymns abound in errors. Dr H. Cooke, of Belfast, said he never had found a compilation of hymns that he "could pronounce free from serious doctrinal errors." In 1838, the old school Presbyterian General Assembly (U.S.) appointed a Committee to revise their hymn-book. In their report they say, "On a critical examination we found many hymns deficient in literary merit, some incorrect in doctrine, and many altogether unsuitable for the sanctuary." What an indictment to bring against the book which their own Church had substituted for God's book of praises! Does anyone suppose that Paul referred to such "Hymns and spiritual songs" as these, and placed them on a level with the Psalms of the Bible for "teaching and admonishing?"

Can the Christian reader believe that Paul pointed to these as standards of doctrine and practice of equal authority with the Psalms for "teaching and admonishing?" No, no. Paul never played fast and loose with the doctrines of the gospel. He says, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." (Gal. i. 8). If there was no other argument to show that the "hymns and spiritual songs?" in which Christians are to teach and admonish one another are not mere human compositions, this would be conclusive. Paul was not advising **the propagation of error.**

IV. The inspired Psalms alone are adapted to be vehicles of grace to the heart, and of praise to the Lord. "Singing with grace in your hearts unto the Lord." Here we have the end to be reached. It is twofold: (1) **Awakening of gracious affections in the heart**, and (2) **the uplifting of the soul to God.** Two characteristics of the inspired Psalms mark their adaptation to this twofold purpose, viz., (a) their **objective nature**, and then (b) their **devotional spirit.** Hymns are **subjective.** Men sing about themselves, their states and experiences, their high resolves. Hymns are introspective. They are self-centred.

The Psalms are **objective**. They are God-centred. The soul looks outward and upward. They lead the soul reverently to adore God "in the beauty of holiness," as the object of praise, and devoutly to bow before Him on His throne, as the hearer of prayer. This is **true devotion**. "Worship God."

The **devotional** character of the book is manifest to all. This is in a pre-eminent sense the devotional book of the Bible. It is sometimes asserted that the Psalms are not adapted to be the vehicles of grace to the heart, and, therefore, they cannot be successfully employed in religious revivals! Such a view is utterly mistaken.

Think for a moment of the contents of the book: Its views of God; its views of man; its views of law; its views of sin; its views of Christ; its views of repentance; its views of pardon; its views of Covenant-relationship; its views of the new life; its views of judgment; its views of heaven; its views of hell. What is there that is needed for revival that it does not contain? And what book is more likely to be honoured by the Holy Spirit than **His Own Book**? As Dr J. W. Bain has said, the Psalms "will be found suitable for any revival that **comes down**; those revivals that are 'gotten up' may need something less divine.

The fact is that the **greatest revivals** of religion the world has ever seen have been connected with the **exclusive use** of the Psalms. They were used exclusively in the great revivals in the days of Hezekiah, Josiah, Ezra, Nehemiah. The same was true in the revival of Pentecost when 3000 were converted in one day. The period of the Reformation was a grand revival period, and it was a glorious revival of Psalm-singing. The Calvinistic Reformers used the Psalms exclusively. All France was thrilled with their music in the days of the Huguenots. They alone were used in the Scottish Church on that wonderful day at the Kirk of Shotts when under Livingston 500 were converted by one sermon. In the times of Robert McCheyne, when the disciples of Christ continued their meetings until near midnight, they made glad the seasons of the night singing the Songs of Zion.

President Edwards bears testimony as to their use in the great Northampton revival in New England in his day, "One of the most observable features of the work was the singular delight which all the awakened appeared to take in singing Psalms. In houses, in the fields, in the woods, alone and together, they spake forth the praises of their King; and even little children and aged persons who had never before learned to sing, came to sing praises with solemnity and sweetness." It thus appears that the Psalms of the Bible are **eminently adapted to be the vehicles of grace to the heart and of praise to the Lord**. "Singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

We conclude, therefore, that this passage, which has always been relied upon by the advocates of hymn-singing as containing a warrant for their practices, has no such meaning. The titles, "Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs," belong to the inspired Psalms, and as qualified by the word "spiritual" are not true of any other. The Psalms **are** the word of Christ; uninspired songs **are not** His word; the Psalms **are** a true standard for "teaching and admonishing"; uninspired songs **are not**; the Psalms **are** adapted to be the vehicles of grace to the heart and of praise to the Lord; uninspired songs **are not**.

The passage furnishes no warrant for the use of uninspired songs in worship, but is an explicit apostolic injunction that in the praise service of the New Testament Church the divinely authorised Psalmody should be continued.

We cannot close without an earnest appeal to the Christian heart in behalf of two things.

1. **The restoration of God's own Psalter to a place in the hymnals of all the Churches.** The present movement in this direction should have the hearty co-operation of every Christian. Its rejection has been in disregard of the divine appointment, and of the example of our blessed Lord, and of the apostolic authority contained in this passage. It should be restored to its place by the united voice of all Christendom and the joyous acclaim of all Christians. It would be the bringing back of the ark of God.

2. **When the Psalter is restored to its place in the hymnals of the Churches it should be used EXCLUSIVELY in the worship of God.** A place may be found for the use of uninspired songs, but not in worship. **God must be served with His own.** "But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing; for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen." (Mal. i. 14).

Rev. W. D. Ralston, in "Talks on Psalmody," relates the following story: "As I trudged homewards, I stopped at an uncle's, and spent the night there. In the evening I brought out my hymn-book and had some singing with my cousins. After I laid it down, my uncle took it up, put on his glasses, and spent some time in looking through it. He was a firm believer in the exclusive use of the Psalms, and my book was the hymn-book of another denomination. It gave the hymns, and the music, with the names of the composers of each as far as known. Uncle read a hymn, and, naming the author, said, 'I know nothing of him.' He read another, and said, 'I have read about the author of this one. He was a Roman Catholic Priest.' He read another, and said, 'I have often read of this author. He was a good man and an earnest Christian minister.' He

then said, 'Now, John, if I were going to use one of these hymns in the worship of God tonight, which do you think I had best choose, the one about whose author I know nothing, the one by the Roman Catholic Priest, or the one by the earnest Christian minister.' I replied, "The one by the minister." 'True,' said he, 'we should select the one written by the best man; and I see by looking through your book that it contains many hymns written by good men; but if I should find in it one composed by God Himself, would it not be better to sing that than one composed by any good man?' I replied, 'It surely would.' After a little he said, 'I have now carefully looked through your book, and I do not find one hymn in it marked — **Composed by God**; but I have here a little hymn-book, and God by His Holy Spirit has composed every hymn in it; for Peter says '**Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.**' As he spoke, he handed me one of our Psalm-books, and the manner in which he presented his argument made an impression upon my mind that I never forgot."

How conclusive the argument is. We ought to serve God with the best. God's **own book** is the best. When Ingersol said that he "could write a better book than the Bible," Christians were shocked, and denounced him as an "infidel blasphemer." How, then, can we say that we can write a better book of praises than God's Psalter? If it be true that hymn-books are better than the Psalm-book it marks the highest achievement of the race: for then man has transcended God in his own field! If it be not true, then the displacing of the God-made Psalter by the man-made hymn-books in God's worship is **an act of most daring presumption**.

At a meeting of ministers of various denominations in an eastern city, a paper had been read on church-hymnology. General discussion followed the reading. An advocate of the exclusive use of the inspired Psalms employed the following illustration with great effect: "If I had an important message to send to one living in the upper districts of the city, I might summon a messenger boy and say to him: 'Can you carry this message for me to such a person, living in such a part of the city?' And the boy would answer doubtfully: 'I think I can. It is true, I have never been in that part of the city. I was born near here. I have heard of the person to whom you wish to send the message, but I am not acquainted with him; but I think I can find him. I am willing to try.' My message is a very important one, and while satisfied of the good intentions of this boy, I am not quite assured of his ability to fulfil the trust. So I call up another boy, and ask him the same question. At once his face glows with intelligence as he answers, 'O yes, I can carry your message directly to his home. I know all about that part of the city. I was born there. I came here from there. In

fact, your friend sent me down here to find you and bear up any message you might desire to send him.' It would not be difficult to decide which of these messengers I should employ. This is an allegory. If I had a message of praise to send to God, and I employed a hymn to carry it, I would feel uncertain about it; it might reach Him, and it might not. But if I employed a Psalm to carry it, I know that it would ascend to heaven. The Psalm was born there. It came from God to me; and indeed God sent it to me to bear any message of praise I might wish to send up to Him."

— Rev. R. J. George, D.D., Allegheny, Pa., U.S.A.

"I want a name for that man who should pretend that he could make better hymns than the Holy Ghost. His collection is large enough; it wants no addition. It is as perfect as its Author, and not capable of any improvement. Why, in such a case, would any man in the world take it into his head to sit down and write hymns for the use of the Church? It is just the same as if he were to write a new Bible, not only better than the old, but so much better that the old may be thrown aside. What a blasphemous attempt! And yet our hymn-mongers, inadvertently I hope, have come very near to this blasphemy; for they shut out the Psalms, to introduce their own verses into the Church, sing them with great delight, and, as they fancy with great profit; although the practice be in direct opposition to the command of God, and, therefore, cannot possibly be accompanied with the divine blessing."

— William Romaine.

Q2: What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him?

A: The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him. (Proof text: 2 Tim. III, 16). — Westminster Shorter Catechism.

He that does not find his ministry a burden now will find it a burden hereafter, which will sink him lower than the lowest Hell. A ministry that never burdens the heart, the mind and the conscience in this life, will be like a millstone about a man's neck in the world to come.

C. H. Spurgeon.

Obituary

Mrs Catherine MacAskill, Stornoway

This worthy woman, truly "a mother in Israel," was born on 27th October, 1887 in Guershader, a village in the outskirts of Stornoway. Both her parents were professing Christians from early youth and, as may be seen from their obituaries, were eminent in the district for their piety. Her father, Donald MacIver, a native of Ranish, Lochs, was for many years an elder in the Stornoway congregation and for several years a missionary of the Church in South Harris, North Uist, and also for a short time on the Mainland. His father was the noted Alistair MacIver of Ranish, whose obituary appeared in the January 1897 issue of this Magazine. It was he who conducted the services in Stornoway after the formation of the Free Presbyterian Church in 1893 before a church had been built or a minister had been inducted to the congregation. He was then in his 89th year but (to quote from his obituary) "for some time, his youth seemed to be renewed, and his addresses were delivered with a vigour not only wonderful for a man of his age but more particularly for one whose health had been long enfeebled." The services at the time were conducted for the most part in the Drill Hall. Mrs MacAskill had nostalgic memories of walking into town on Sabbath mornings with her two sisters to attend these services and could still recall the rat-tat of feet on the Drill Hall floor as folk entered and took their seats on forms and improvised seating of planks on trestles.

It is natural to assume that with such antecedents the subject of the obituary grew up in an atmosphere of deep regard for the things of God — His word, His day, His people and His cause in the world. The imprint of this early background was indelibly etched in her memory. Its fragrance lingered with her throughout her life. Those who were nearest to her testify to the fact that she would often revert to it, recalling in graphic style the sweet savour of her early life in Guershader where her home was a resting place for the Lord's people travelling, for the most part on foot, from country villages to the town. She would often recall how deeply touched she used to feel when as a young girl she would listen to the Lord's people met in close fellowship at her home, especially at Communion Seasons, as they conversed about things that "concerned the King." No doubt this was the reason for her sometimes remarking that grown-ups were apt to underestimate the impact made on young impressionable minds by their conversation in the truth. Later, when she herself married and settled in Stornoway, she emulated this fine example of hospitality in her own home.

The example of her parents and the standards set by them were ever before her mind throughout her life. Often she would recall for her own guidance and edification remarks made by them at critical junctures or when they were passing through difficult providences, and even in the later years of her life she was wont to confess how their example came sharply before her to chasten her for her shortcoming. Endeavouring thus to walk in the way into which she had been guided by her parents, Mrs MacAskill seems to have from her tenderest years cherished a deep attachment for the things of God. When deploring her spiritual barrenness in advanced life she would recall how in these early years she had often been melted by the preaching of the Gospel and the high regard, approaching almost to a kind of awe, in which she held the ambassadors of Christ at a time when the Free Presbyterian Church was in its infancy and much abuse was directed at it for its adherence to the truth.

Some reserve was shown by her when it came to disclosing details of her spiritual experience but on her own admission she could not tell her spiritual birthday. In regard to this she seems to have been greatly exercised throughout her life. It explains why so many years of her life elapsed before she made a public profession of her faith, although often, after searching self-examination, inwardly constrained to do so. The actual occasion of her doing so is rather remarkable. After the afternoon service on the Saturday of a communion in Stornoway she had occasion to return to the church to retrieve an article left behind in the pew by one of her guests. By that time the Session had been constituted and the last opportunity had come for anyone wishing to come forward to the Lord's Table to meet with the Session. On seeing the members of the Session the words came before her mind with compelling power: "To these long desolations thy feet lift; do not tarry . . ." Forgetting about the purpose of her returning to the church, she walked down the aisle towards the Session. In relating this experience long afterwards she declared, "I found it very easy in spite of all my former fears, and I have never regretted that step." Next day, the Communion Sabbath, when she rose to go forward to the Table, her husband, then in his late sixties, was deeply stirred as he received no hint of her intention. Later, after he himself had come to profess the Saviour, he remarked on the quickening effect upon him of seeing his wife rise unexpectedly from his side to go to the Lord's Table. It caused the things of eternity to weigh heavily upon his spirit.

Mrs MacAskill's life, walk and conversation was always consistent with her profession. A woman of strong and independent character, yet she was endowed with natural charm and friendliness of disposition which endeared her to all. Her sunny smile was a tonic to all whom she greeted. Although

acutely sensible of the spiritual darkness of modern times and the weakness of the Cause of Christ, she would always point to the sovereignty of the Most High and stress recourse to prayer as the prime duty in the present situation.

The Word of God was for her an unfailing source of strength and comfort at all times. She would recall, with discretion, when circumstances were suitable, portions of truth which had been her strength and which had sustained her in difficult situations in her life's journey, landmarks on her way to the Celestial City. In this connection she was not without her share of the tribulations of this world. All those who had shared her early home life in Guershader predeceased her by many years, all of them having testified to a saving interest in Christ and she was bereft of her husband in 1958. In her married life, entered upon at the age of twenty, she suffered several bereavements, especially grievous being the loss, within three years, of a son and daughter of considerable promise in their late adolescence. In all these dispensations the Word of God upheld her and the example of resignation and quiet composure which she always manifested in the presence of such trials was a source of reassurance and strength to all in her family circle.

She loved the house of God. In this connection favourite psalms of hers were Psalm 87 with special reference to the lines: "God, more than Jacob's dwellings all, delights in Zion's gates;" and Psalm 65: "Praise waits for thee in Sion, Lord" and also Psalm 63: "Lord thee my God I'll early seek, my soul doth thirst for thee." She would often recall how she used to "throw herself into the pew" exhausted by the ceaseless round of domestic duties, to emerge later, refreshed and invigorated in body and soul. On one occasion while passing through a particularly fiery trial she felt so exhausted and cast down that, when the hour of public worship approached, she was greatly tempted to forego her attendance on the house of God. Meanwhile, one of her sons, still a young boy, was sitting on his own by the fireside with a psalmody in his hand and singing heartily to himself in Psalm 96 reaching the words in verse 6: "Great honour is before his face, and majesty divine; Strength is within his holy place, and there doth beauty shine." No sooner did these words reach her ears from the lips of the boy than she heard the voice of the Master in them and like Mary in Bethany, "As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto Him." It was a matter of deep concern to her when through the infirmities of age she had perforce to curtail her attendance in church. She herself was blessed with a melodious voice and nothing gave her greater joy than to sing the praises of Him who loved her and washed her from her sins in His own blood. In the goodness of the Most High she was able to do this with

fervour up till the last two weeks of her life. Being endowed with a retentive memory and having sat under seven ministries, she could recall many choice remarks uttered from the pulpit of the Stornoway Free Presbyterian church and occasions when the word preached distilled upon her soul like Hermon's dew.

Like many who asked the way to Sion before her, Mrs MacAskill knew on occasions, what it meant to mourn the absence of her Beloved and, having a keen sense of the corruption of her whole nature often lamented her own barrenness and carnality. In this context she would often quote an account of an incident read by her not many years before her end which made a deep impression on her. It occurred in a biographical sketch of the Rev. John MacRae ("MacRath Mor"). In the course of a morning walk he had met an old lady, one of his flock, eminent in the community for her godliness. On his asking her how she was she pleaded difficulty about revealing her state but confessed: I am like a dead dog thrown behind a dyke on which the worms and maggots are battenning."

Mrs MacAskill's attachment to the Lord's people was very evident and she was specially tender about causing any of them offence, even the weakest and most despised. It grieved her very much to hear preachers of the gospel, ministers or laymen, disparaged or their services belittled. With her a frequent subject of thankfulness and praise was the inestimable privilege of having preachers of the gospel who declared the truth in all its fullness uncompromisingly. She loved to meet strangers brought into contact with the Free Presbyterian Church as a result of their attachment to the truth and to welcome them to her hospitable home. In her constant wrestling at the throne of grace for the advancement of Christ's Cause in the world and the blessing of his ambassadors' labours her heart would go out to "every nation and kindred and tongue," a frequent petition being: "Let the whole earth be filled with His glory."

Up till January 1973, Mrs MacAskill was remarkably alert mentally, although physically frail. At that time a deterioration in her faculties became apparent. Just prior to this she seemed to be in a very happy frame of mind and remarked with obvious enthusiasm what a wonderful experience she had enjoyed in the truth that day — the prelude to many months during which the house of her tabernacle was steadily crumbling. In the months that followed, although the process of degeneration in her faculties continued her attachment to the things of God remained unchanged. With a little assistance she would quote the truth with remarkable accuracy and sing the praises of the Most High with her former zest. Her mind seemed to be browsing much in the Song of Solomon, these verses being frequently on her lips: "Come with me from

Lebanon, my spouse . . .” John’s Gospel was also precious to her at this time. In the last two weeks of her life she took a sudden turn for the worse. When it was suggested to her that the change was just a turn that would pass over, she demurred and settling down quietly proceeded to recite Psalm 23 in Gaelic with quiet deliberation — a token for good, we believe, before shortly entering “the valley of the shadow of death.” In the following days there was a sharp decline in her strength, and speech became for her a great effort. Although now suffering acute physical discomfort she appeared to be quite lucid mentally. On the day before her death there was evidence of a desire to be with Christ, a frequent petition in whispered accents being: “Come, Lord Jesus, take me as I am. Grant it, if it be thy holy will.”

She departed this life, peacefully, on Sabbath morning, the 14th October 1973, with her son and daughter, who had so devotedly and lovingly cared for her during her last illness, at her bedside. We are indebted to them for the information contained in this obituary. To them, their sister in England and their brother, the Rev. D. J. MacAskill, Uig, we extend our deepest sympathy and pray that they may enjoy the consolations of Him who ever remains the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort.

J. McL

Gathan Gloir na Diadhachd

Lels an Urr. Eldeard Pearce

(Air a leantuinn bho t.d. 22)

6. Tha Dia neo-chaochlaidheach 'n a ghràs agus 'n ghràdh dha shluagh. Tha gràdh aig Dia dhà shluagh le gràdh sònraichte agus ro ghnàthaichte, gràdh de leithid de ghné 's a thà ghràdh do Chrìosd. Iob xvii. 23. Thà iad dàrlleadh na'n gràdh sònraichte anama, mar a thà e agaobh ann an Ier. xii. 7. Agus anns a ghràdh so Aige dha'n taobh tha E neochaochlaidheach, a nì ceudna a ghnàth, nì a dh'fhosgla mì suas ann am beagan ùine, agus a dhearbhas mì dhuibh ann an trì ròidean.

1. Thà Dia neo-chaochlaidheach ann 'n a ghràdh Fein dhà shluagh, air dhà sin a bhi ghnàth a' nì ceudna; “Seadh le gràdh siorruidh ghràdhaich mì thù; uime sin tharruig mì thù le coimhneas gràdhach. Ier. xxxi. 3. Le gràdh a thà bho bhith-bhuant achd gu bith-bhuantachd, gu'n atharrachadh gu'n chrìch; thà gràdh Dhé Dhà shluagh cho seasmhach agus cho daingean agus nach eil nì ann am bith comasach air a dhùbhadh a mach na atharrachadh; cha'n eil nì ai bith comasach air an tilgeadh a

mach as a chridhe; na'n deanadh nì air bith e b'e am peacaidhean fein na aghaidh, agus am brisidhean bh'uaith, ach cha'n urrain iad so a dheanamh, oir dh'innis E dhuinn ann an Salm lxxxix. 30, 31, 32, 33. Ma pheacaiceas cronaichidh mì iad air son am peacaidhean, ach chà tòir mì mo choimhneas ghràidh bh'uapa, na mar a thà cuid dhà eadar-theangachadh, cha dean mì urrad agus gu'm bac mì mo ghràdh bh'uapa; mar gu'n abradh E, ged a thà iad a peacachadh, gidheadh thà gràdh agam dhoibh fathasd: cha'n eil Dia a gràdhachadh peacaidhean a shluaigh, cha'n eil, thà fuath Aige dhoibh, ach thà E'g gràdhachadh am pearsachan, a dh'aindeoin am peacaidhean; ach ciod e ma thà àmhghairean agus buairidhean air an cur ri'm peacaidhean, agus ma thà iad le cheile ag eirigh gu h-àrd, am bris so a ghràdh bh'uatha? Cha bhris, faic buaidh-chaithream an Abstoil air a chùis so. "Co sgaras sinn o ghràdh Chrìosd? an dean trioblaid, no àmhghair, no geurleanmhuinn, no gorta, no lomnochduidh, no cunnart, no claidheamh? (a reir mar a tha e sgriobhta. Air do shon-sa mharbhadh sinn re an latha; mheasadh sinn mar chaoraich chùm marbhaidh) Cha'n eadh, ach anns na nithean sin uile thà sinn a toirt tuilleadh agus buaidh trid-san a ghràdhaich sinn. Oir thà dearbh-bheachd agam, nach bì bàs, na beatha, na aingeal, na uachdaranachdan, no cumhachdan, no nithean a thà làthair, no nithean a thà ri teachd, no àirde, no doimhne, no creutair sam bith eile, comasach air sinne a sgaradh o ghràdh Dhé a thà ann an Iosa Crìosd ar Tighearna. "rom. viii. 35-39. Ann an so tha sibh a faicinn àmhghairean agus buairidhean air an cur r'a 'm peacaidhean, seadh, ann an so thà àirde agus doimhneachdan na nithean so, ach cha'n urrain iad uile bhi dealachadh sluagh Dhé bho a ghràdh, na'n tilgeadh a mach as a chridhe. Thà aon is cuimhne leam a toirt suim na'n uile anns an fhocal ghoird so, "Ghràdhaich Dia bho shiorruidheachd, agus gràdhaichidh E tre'm t-siorruidheachd." 'S e'n fhìrinn a th'ann, na'm b' urrain aon chuid peacaidhean na fulungasan ar tilgeadh a mach a cridhe Dhé agus ar dealachadh bho a ghràdh, co a' measg na naomh dha'm b'urraìn dòchas a bhì aige buannachadh na ghràdh, agus air a chridhe? A bhàr air sin, anns an àite a dh'ainmicheadh bho chionn ghoirid, Isiah liv. 9 thà Diaf ag ràdh gu sònraichte ged a bhiodh na beanntan air an atharrachadh, gidheadh nach bì a choibhneas Dhà shluagh air atharrachadh; nì-h-eadh, thà sin a mairsinn cinnteach agus daingean gu bràth. Is fìor e, faodaidh Dia àmhghairean a chur air a shluagh, agus sin air iomadh dòigh, agus gu math goirt; faodaidh E labhairt na'n aghaidh, mar ann an aghaidh Ephraim, Ier. xxxi. 20; sgriobhadh na'n aghaidh nithean cruaidh mar ann an aghaidh Iob, Iob. xiii. 26. Faodaidh e sabaid na'n aghaidh mar ann an aghaidh muinntir ann an Isiah lxiii. 10. Faodaidh E bhi folach a ghnùis, agus a leigeadh a stigh uamhasan, mar a rinn E air agus ann an **Heman**,

Salm lxxxviii., ach gidheadh thà E fathasd dhà'n gràdhachadh, agus thà iad fathasd gràdhaichte Leis.

2. Tha Dia neo-chaochlaidheach ann an uile thoraidhean agus buaidhean sònraichte agus slàinteil a ghràidh dà shluagh. "Oir thà tiodhlacan agus gairm Dhé gu'n aithreachas." Rom. xi. 29. 'S e sin, tiodhlacan a ghairm eufacaich, na a thiodhlacan slàinteil, mar a thà ghairm eufacachd, agus a leithidean sin, chà bhì E gabhail aithreachais, nà dhà'n gairm air ais, na cur na'n aghaidh; mar nach eil a mhuinntir a thuair na tiodhlacan sin a faicinn aobhar air son aithreachais ach a bhì deanamh aoibhnis annta gu bràth; oir Dia a thà dha'n toirt seachad, cha'n fhaic E aobhar air son aithreachais gu'n tug E seachad dhoibh iad. Thà Dia a toirt Chrìosd, thà E toirt gràs, thà E toirt sìth, thà E toirt maitheanas, thà E toirt freantachd, thà E toirt slàinte, thà E toirt beatha mhaireanach dhà shluagh, agus uile gu leir do-bhrìgh a ghràidh dhoibh; agus chà toir E air ais, nà chà tilg E bun os ceann, toraidhean agus buadhan sin a ghràidh. Thà agaibh earrann shlàn eile air a so, "Thà gach uile dheagh thabhartas, agus gach thiohlaic iomlan o'n àirde, a teachd a nuas o Athair na soillse, maille ris nach eil atharrachadh, na sgàile tionndaidh." Seumas i. 17. Gabh beachd an deigh labhairt air tiodhlacan iomlan Dhé, thà E anns a bhad a cur so ris, "Maille ris nach eil atharrachadh;" mar gu'n abradh E, mar a thà gach uile tiodhlac maith agus slàinteil a tighinn bho Dhia, mar sin thà E neo-chaochlaidheach anns na h-uile. Gu dearbh thà tiodhlacan coitchionn ann, agus tiodhlacan bho'n leth a muigh, anns am bheil Dia, a cur a mach a ghràdh cumanta agus fialaidheachd a toirt do dhaoine, agus iad so thà E iomadh uair a toirt air ais, air dhoibh a mì-bhuileachadh. Mar sin bha'n tàlant air a thoirt bho'n t-seirbhiseach leisg. Mata xxv. 28, agus thà fios agaibh ciod a thà Chrìosd a labhairt air ball an deigh sin ann an rànn 29, "Oir ge b'e neach aig am bheil bheirear, agus bidh aige gu pailte: ach uaith-san aig nach eil, bheirear eadhon a nì sin a thà aige." Gabhaibh beachd, thà mì guidhe oirbh, dhàsan aig am bheil bheirear dhà; 's e sin, ge b'e dha'n tug Dia tiodhlacan agus tàlant, agus a chuireas gu buile iad air son Dhé agus a shlàinte fein, bithidh an tuilleadh thiodhlacan agus thàlant air a thoirt dhà; bithidh meudachadh saoi bhir aige anns na nithean sin. "buinibh uaithe, uime sin, an tàlann, agus thugaibh dhàsan e, aig am bheil na deich tàlann." Ann an so shaoladh neach gu'm bheil nithean an aghaidh a cheile; "Esan aig nach eil," agus "gidheadh, a nì a th'aig;" gu h-aithghearr 's e so ciall a nì, 'n uair a bheir Dia seachad a leithidean sin de thiodhlacan agus do thàlantann do neach gu bhì air a chur gu buil a chùim a ghlòir, agus nach cuir e gu buil iad a chùim sin, chà chuir e gu feum ceart iad, a nì a bhuilich Dia air bithidh e air a thoirt bh' uaithe. Ach thà e air e adar-dhealachadh dòigh a thaobh

toraidhean agus tiodhlacan slàinteil gràdh sonraichte Dhé. Chà toir Dia air ais iad so. Nì a thà na bheachd-smuainteachadh milis, Anam! Nà bhuilich Dia cuid de thiodhlacan slainteil ortsas? An sin is leatsa iad gu bràth. An tug E dhuit a Chrìosd? Cha ghabh E aithreachas dhe sin, chà toir E air ais E gu bràth. Ach is leatsa Iosa milis gu bràth. An tug E dhuit a Spiorad? Cha ghabh E aithreachas, mì moth bheir E air an tiodhlacan beannaichte so bh'uat. An spiorad naomh, maith, agus glòrmhor, is leatsa gu bràth. An tug E dhuit beatha nuadh agus spioradail? An tug E dhuit gràs, maitheanas, agus fireantachd, agus an leithidean sin? Chà ghabh E aithreachas dhà thaobh. Is leatsa iad uile agus gu bràth. O cia milis a thà so a bhi beachd-smuainteachadh air! Faodaidh tù suidh sìos agus a ràdh, Is leam-sa Crìosd, is leam an Comhfhurtair, is leamsa beatha, sìthm maitheanas, fireantachd, agus slàinte, agus sin gu bràth.

(R'a leantuinn)

Letter

By Rev. R. M. McCheyne, Dundee

(To a Society in Blairgowrie for Diffusing the Knowledge of the Truth)

Dundee, March 27, 1841

My Dear Friend,

I was happy indeed to receive your letter, and the rules of your Society, which interested me very much. I would have answered you sooner, but have been laid down by my heavenly Father on a bed of sickness, from which I am just recovering by His grace. Spared fig-trees should bear much fruit; pray that it may be so with me. Luther used to say that "temptations, afflictions and prayers made a minister." I do trust that your Society may be greatly blessed, first, in the comforting, enlivening and sanctifying of your own souls, and then in bringing others to know the same Fountain where you have found peace and purity. Let Jesus come into your meetings and sit at the head of the table. It is a fragrant room when the Bundle of Myrrh is the chief thing there. Let there be no strife among you, but who to be lowest at His feet, who to lean their head most fully on His breast, Let all your conversation, meditations and readings lead you to the Lamb of God. Satan would divert your mind away to questions and old wives' fables, which gender strifes. But the Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus — draws to Jesus — makes you cleave to the Lord Jesus with full purpose of heart. Seek advance of personal holiness. It is for this the grace of God has appeared to you — See Titus 2:11, 12. For this Jesus

died; for this He chose you; for this He converted you, to make you holy men — living epistles of Christ — monuments of what God can do in a sinner's heart. You know what true holiness is. It is Christ in you the hope of glory. Let Him dwell in you, and so all His features will shine in your hearts and faces. Oh to be like Jesus! This is heaven, wherever it be. I think I would be happy among devils, if only the old man were slain in me, and I was made altogether like Jesus! But, blessed be God, we shall not be called to such a trial, for we shall not only be like Jesus, but be with Him to behold His glory. Pray to be taught to pray. Do not be content with old forms that flow from the lips only. Most Christians have need to cast their formal prayers away, to be taught to cry, Abba. Arrange before hand what you have to pray for. Do not forget confession of sin, nor thanksgiving. Pray to get your closed lips open in intercession; embrace the whole world, and carry it within the veil. I think you might with advantage keep a small book in which you might mark down objects to be prayed for. I pray God to make you very useful in the parish and in the world. Do all things without murmurings and disputings — See Phil. 2:14, 16. Live for eternity. A few days more, and our journey is done. Oh! fight hard against sin and the devil never sleeps. Be you also active for good. The Lord bless you and your dear minister. Pray for us, Pray for the dead parishes around you — Ever yours, etc., R. M. McCheyne.

Book Reviews

A Commentary on Daniel: Edward J. Young. The Banner of Truth Trust. £1.50

This book provides us with a valuable addition to the Geneva Series of Commentaries, containing, as it does, a very scholarly, but devotional, interpretation of this important book of the Old Testament, written from the conservative and evangelical point of view. The difficulties of a proper interpretation of this important book of the Old Testament, written from Critical School has made the most of these, to the detriment of the book as an essential part of the divinely-inspired Scriptures. Professor Young's contribution to a gracious understanding of the book, both in its historical and prophetic portions, is invaluable, and one for which all who love the Word of God aright should be grateful to the One who bestowed upon the author such obvious and competent gifts to meet the critics on their own literary and linguistic grounds, and, in our humble view, to refute their

specious arguments against the veracity of the book of Daniel so ably and completely.

As is known, the book contains a narrative section on the life of Daniel in Babylon, together with a prophetic section on future events in reference to the Kingdom of God. Unlike the higher critics, Professor Young accepts the former as factual, and deals very thoroughly with the arguments revolving around this section. The interpretation of the latter presents many difficulties, but here again, one is refreshed to find that the learned author approaches them all in a spirit of humble faith, and re-affirms for this modern age of scepticism, the time-honoured and traditional interpretation of the Messianic Kingdom. In a short review such as this, it is impossible to enter into details. We would recommend the perusal of the work, not only to the specialist reader, but also to all who are interested in understanding the mysteries of the kingdom, relative to the glorious King of Sion, who was cut off, but not for Himself, and now reigns above for evermore.

By the lamented death of Professor Young, the church of God lost one of its ablest exponents of the Scriptures of Truth, and especially those of the Old Testament. This and other works from his pen, however, remain as part of his memorial, and a most valuable legacy to posterity, for which we should be for ever grateful.

A.M.C.

2nd Corinthians: Galatians. Geoffrey B. Wilson. The Banner of Truth Trust. 35p each.

These are two more paperback Commentaries by Mr Wilson which have exactly the same format as his previous contributions in this field of literature. In general, therefore, the remarks, which we have already made about these former books, are also applicable to the above volumes. The reader is presented, in a convenient and pleasing manner, with a verse by verse commentary, which is largely made up of quotations from the works of other authors of the Reformed school of Theology. The author's choice is to be commended, especially in the case of the volume on Galatians, since this Epistle is so vital to the doctrine of Justification by Faith.

While the commentaries are not meant to be critical, in the sense in which E. J. Young's work on Daniel is critical, yet it is good to find references to some of the questions which concern, for instance, the unity of the Epistle to the Corinthians, under review. The author is quite convinced, contrary to the opinion of liberal scholars, that the last section (chapters 10 to 13) is not the product of another author nor even of the same, in another letter. The marked change of tone in these chapters is not

inconsistent with the view that the whole was written at the same time, and deals with the same subject. Comments, such as these, by the author himself, show us where he stands in these controversial matters.

We had occasion to regret, in our previous reviews the very frequent use of translations from the various modern versions, and are, therefore, pleased to note, under "acknowledgements," that Mr Wilson, in referring to the continued use of these versions makes the point that their use should not be taken as a blanket endorsement of the theological liberalism they so often reflect. For this explanation, we are grateful. In contrast to the Commentary on Daniel, reviewed above, these two short books are easily read. This, together with their cheaper price, and convenient size, make these commentaries suitable for a much larger reading public, and we wish them much publicity. May they be used of the Lord to help His people and others to a fuller understanding of two precious and important portions of Holy Writ. The riches of God's grace are unfolded in Galatians and 2nd Corinthians in no uncertain terms, and these volumes help to focus our attention upon them, by means of the many appropriate words from so many different pens, with which the text of these two books is adorned, as with nuggets of gold.

A.M.C.

William Tiptaft by J. C. Philpot

William Tiptaft is attractively published by the Gospel Standard Baptist Trust. Tiptaft was a contemporary and close friend of J. C. Philpot, who is the author of this biography. Philpot's readable style of writing makes interesting reading, and a not out-dated direct and simple presentation adds appeal.

The author deals with the pre-eminent events in the life of Tiptaft, showing how he entered the ministry of the Church of England in an unregenerate state in 1826. Although there is mention of his conversion by 1827 there is little detail and one feels a lack here, especially respecting one who became so eminently useful in Christ's cause. But it is evident by his fruit that he was indeed born again.

For all who are convinced that the Reformed teaching is Scriptural, the account of how Tiptaft was brought from holding an Arminian position to receive the Biblical doctrines of Calvinism will be of importance. What is also noticed is the way the Lord blessed his ministry as a Calvinist and as a Biblical Christian. Furthermore, the doctrines of grace did not in the least inactivate him or dull his fervency. Whether Tiptaft took up a hyper-Calvinistic position is not made clear by the book.

Another point to note, especially when the Charismatic movement is gaining so much ground today, is that Tiptaft was also confronted with neo-pentecostalism. A close friend of his, Bulteel, once curate of St Ebbs, Oxford, for a time became entangled with Irving and the associated tongues and gifts of healing movement. While under this distraction, Bulteel renounced Reformed teaching, embraced Arminian views and went even further to include serious errors concerning the humanity of Christ. Today when the Charismatic movement gains ground it is evident that it does not lead back to the truth, when Roman Catholic priests continue even with such gifts to be satisfied with blasphemous and superstitious practices. Yet the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth and He guides into all truth. (John 16).

The book, besides its historical account of Tiptaft, includes many of his letters. In these the man speaks for himself throughout. Such correspondence backs up or enlarges upon what the author states concerning him. It is in his correspondence that the exercises of his soul are expressed and will be found of value to those who follow in the footsteps of the flock. At the close of the book there is included a sermon he preached to a congregation of about 5000, which was blessed to many. Again one is impressed with the practical nature of his Christianity. The way he was willing to part with his living as a vicar, for conscience sake, and how he provided for John Kay, are but two examples.

This book is to be commended to our readers for the interesting and profitable material it contains.

E.R.

Sermons and Biographical Notes of Pastor Ernest Roe. Price £2.00 Post free.

We are very pleased that this book has appeared, for we considered Mr Roe one of the most evangelical and faithful preachers we have listened to. The volume under review is but a sample of his preaching for over sixty-five years among the Gospel Standard Strict Baptist denomination. During that time his faithful preaching made many enemies but at the same time made many friends. These friends were truly the salt of the earth, and they knew what it was to be in the depths and what it was to be raised out of the depths. Many a time they got an uplift under Mr Roe's preaching. The volume before us contains twenty-five sermons, and are but a few of the many sermons which he preached. His labours were numerous. According to a record which was found after his death he preached no fewer than 10,312 sermons and ministered in 139 Strict Baptist Chapels during his life.

He had the example of godly parents and also their instruction, but it

was the work of the Holy Spirit, which was very evident in his preaching and in his walk and conversation, which turned him from darkness unto light and from the power of sin and Satan unto God. His was a severe struggle. Of that period he said in after years, "My dear parents would cry to see me in that sinful condition, but even a tender father's words and a loving mother's words could not soften my hard heart and change my stubborn will. "After an extraordinary deliverance he was constrained to enlist in the service of Christ as a preacher of the gospel. His labours were used much by the Holy Spirit, both to strengthen and direct the Lord's people who were already in Christ, and to gather in those who were still on the mountains of vanity, and to raise them up as living monuments of free and sovereign grace.

Mr Roe's comment on Muckle Kate of Lochcarron is well worth reading. He is preaching on the Woman of Samaria and says with reference to the tract on Muckle Kate, "I am glad our Scottish friends have re-issued this little trophy of grace as it is called. It is a touching but powerful reminder, if you and I need one, that we haven't sounded the depths of grace yet. We haven't got to the bottom of the 'manner of love' that God has bestowed upon us in Christ. It is a bigger gospel than you or I know of."

The book may be had from Mrs Grace Patterson, "Bracadale," The Avenue, Amptill, Bedford MK45 2NR. Mrs Patterson is a daughter of Mr Roe, and is well known to a number of our Free Presbyterian Congregations. J.C.

Church Notes

Appeal from London Congregation

In the good providence of the Lord, the London Congregation have now purchased a Church and Manse. The purchase price of the Church is £17,000 and that of the Manse £16,500. The Church which was formerly called Zoar Chapel is a neat building which will hold a congregation of at least 150. It will need some repairs and decoration. The Manse also is very suitable. Considering the price of buildings of a similar nature in London, it would appear that the Lord has been favourable in opening up the way for this congregation to purchase a new Church and Manse at such reasonable cost.

The Synod has already made it clear that the Church as a whole should take a special interest in the London Congregation and now that the

opportunity has arisen and such suitable buildings have become available, it is thought appropriate to make an appeal to friends throughout the Church to assist.

The Congregation, as is well known, is small in numbers and will need generous assistance to meet the purchase price of these buildings, quite apart from any repairs etc., which may be needed. The Deacons' Court therefore make an earnest appeal to the people of the Church to assist the congregation as generously as possible. Donations should be sent to the Congregational Treasurer, Mr John Campbell, 93 Oaks Avenue, Worcester Park, Surrey.

(Rev.) L. MacLeod, Interim Moderator.

The Southern Presbytery endorse this Appeal and commend it to the people of the Church.

MALCOLM MACSWEEN,
Clerk of Presbytery.

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Northern — At Dingwall on Tuesday 12th February 1974 at 7 p.m.

Southern — At Glasgow on Tuesday 19th February 1974 at 6 p.m.

Outer Isles — At Stornoway on Tuesday 26th February 1974 at 3.30 p.m.

Recommendation re Reception of Students By Kirk-Sessions

The following recommendation of the Training of the Ministry Committee was approved by the Synod at its meeting in September, and is hereby brought to the notice of all concerned, viz., "To alter the Regulations governing the acceptance of students by Kirk-Sessions by reverting to the former practice of requiring a certain minimum standard of proficiency in educational qualifications before the candidate makes application to be received as a student studying for the ministry. The applicant shall be required to produce passes in Higher Grade English, and two other subjects on the Ordinary Grade. Exceptional cases may, however, be referred to the Synod for its judgment, at the discretion of the lower courts."

A. M. Cattanach, Convener of Training of Ministry Committee.

Correction

In the January issue of the magazine, page 25, the words "statement of theory" in the second last line of the book review on the Commentary of 1st John by Robt. Candlish should read "statement or theory."

Apology

We regret that the wrong list of Communion appeared in the January issue of the magazine. The correct list appears in this issue.

Acknowledgment of Donations

The General Treasurer, Mr Wm. D. Fraser, F.C.M.A., 20 Daleview Avenue, Glasgow G12 0HE, acknowledges the following donations with sincere thanks—

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